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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - UPGRADE CLASSIFICATION TO SECRET

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/23/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [MOPS](#) [KISL](#) [NP](#) [PK](#) [CH](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: BJP MEMBER CLAIMS THE RSS IS ACTIVE IN NEPAL - CORRECTED COPY

REF: NEW DELHI 863

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Classified By: PolCouns Ted Osius for Reasons 1.4 (B,D)

11. (S) SUMMARY: Bharataya Janata Party (BJP) member and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) activist Seshadiri Chari (PROTECT), claimed March 19 that the RSS is involved with the Madhesi movement in Nepal's southern Terai region. This is the first RSS confirmation Post has had. Chari claimed the RSS hoped to "encourage federalism" in Nepal and weaken Maoists, whom he claimed are storing their weapons across the border in India. The RSS activist also suggested that Pakistan's intelligence agency (ISI) has funded a mosque in Kathmandu, while China was using Maoists to further its economic agenda. END SUMMARY.

The RSS: "Strengthening Nepal" Through the Madhesi Movement?

12. (S) National Executive Member of the BJP Party and activist of the grass roots nationalist Hindu organization RSS, Seshadiri Chari (PROTECT), told PolOff March 19 that the

RSS is "involved" (NFI) with the Madhesi movement in Nepal's southern Terai region. (Note: Madhesis are ethnic Indians in Nepal currently staging violent protests and strikes for civil rights and better representation in the upcoming Constituent Assembly election. End note.) He indicated that RSS involvement was aimed at "strengthening Nepal" and "encouraging federalism." Nepal would be vulnerable without a strong federalist, centrist government or a monarch to "keep the country together," stated Chari. He also claimed that that Maoists are storing weapons across the open border in India, and indicated that, with RSS assistance, the Madhesi movement could push back against Maoist intimidation and reduce their power. Chari predicted that Maoists will use force to ensure their control of constituencies where they do not have, or have lost, popularity, such as the Terai. "Then the weapons will come out," opined Chari.

Conspiracy Theories: Pakistan and China

¶3. (S) Chari described the concern of the RSS over what he termed the "Islamization of Nepal," which he said started around 1996. He complained that Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency (ISI) was infiltrating Nepal's porous border with India, which he characterized as "strung with madrassas." Chari suggested that ISI funded construction of a mosque in Kathmandu that is taller than the King's palace. He also expressed suspicion that the Chinese were using the Maoists to "further their economic agenda," and could use Nepal as a "springboard for the whole of South Asia."

¶4. (S) COMMENT: When Chari was editor of the RSS mouthpiece "The Organizer," he was well plugged into the RSS and BJP leadership. However, he has not been editor for over two years, and has lost further influence since the RSS leadership shuffle. His statements regarding RSS policy may

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therefore not reflect the thinking of the top rungs of the RSS. RSS cadres often engage in flights of rhetorical overkill. While Chari's statements express the wishes of most RSS faithful, they cannot be interpreted as confirmation that the organization is playing a significant role in Nepal.

While there has been wide speculation in the press that the BJP and/or the RSS have been involved in the unrest in Nepal's Terai region, Chari is the first RSS leader that Post has heard make a claim to that effect. Chari did not elaborate on the extent of "involvement" and did not imply that the Government of India was involved. As described in reftel, even if the BJP and RSS are involved, Post believes that the Government of India is not, as it does not control the opposition BJP. Still, if what Chari says is true, exposure of RSS cross-border support for the Madhesi movement would weaken India's overall helpful role in Nepal's recent political process. Post is using the ORA and DATT channels to check the veracity of Chari's claim. What is certain is that the RSS are implacable foes of the Maoists. END COMMENT.

¶5. (U) This message has been coordinated with Embassy Kathmandu.
MULFORD